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EDITOR R.PALME DUTT

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The Editor
Confrontation

Basil Davidson
Britain and the Liberation Struggle

George Montgomery
The Robens Report

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The Rent Struggle

Abdul Minty : Idris Cox : Andrew Rothstein
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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Notes of the Month

CONFRONTATION

> **'I feel bound to tell you that in our opinion we are at your mercy . . . If a force arises in the state which is stronger than the state itself, then it must be ready to take on the functions of the state, or withdraw . . . Gentlemen, have you considered, and if you have, are you ready?'**
>
> Premier LLOYD GEORGE, confrontation with the trade union leaders at 10 Downing Street, in 1919.

February 12, 1973

Over half a century has passed since that confrontation. The TUC leadership at that time did not feel prepared to take up the challenge presented to them by Lloyd George. The price for the unreadiness at that time to take up that class challenge, in an era when the first victory of socialism in the world was pointing the way for advance to a new social order, had to be paid with the mass depression and unemployment of millions which began its blows from the winter of 1920 and continued its grim record for decades without a break until only war changed the situation; the betrayal of the heroic struggle of the working class in the general strike; and the shameful years of Mondism, of servile co-operation with the employers and persecution of the militant left. But the issues of our epoch are not so easily dismissed. Today this basic class confrontation is developing anew at a far higher stage of historical development, with a more acute stage of crisis of British capitalism, and with a far higher strength of the organised working class.

Changing Balance in the World

This deepening class confrontation in Britain is taking place in the midst of a changing balance in the world, with the victories of the advance of socialism and national liberation and the progressive forces of the peoples, despite setbacks or cross-currents, and the intensified contradictions within the now more restricted, though still powerful and dangerous, imperialist world. Nothing has more conspicuously demonstrated this change in the world balance than the contrast between the harsh outcome of the epic struggle of the Spanish Democratic Republic, supported by the progressive forces of the peoples of all countries, against the assault of Axis fascism in the nineteen-thirties, and the victorious outcome of the long,

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thirty years' struggle of the Vietnam people, with international progressive support, against the assault of successive imperialist powers, culminating in the aggression of the most powerful and ruthless world leader of imperialism, American imperialism, utilising the most barbaric methods of genocide and devastation, and finally exploding in what their own official spokesmen claimed to be 'the heaviest bombardment in history', yet ending in the cease-fire of January 1973, which the Vietnam people have justly celebrated as a victory, leading to the withdrawal of the open participation of US combat troops. Certainly the cease-fire is not yet the end of the struggle; within the conditions of the cease-fire American imperialist reaction continues to pursue its long-term aims in eastern Asia, as exposed in the revealing American study, now published also in Britain, *The Open Secret: the Kissinger-Nixon Doctrine in Asia**. World solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnam people is still of vital importance. But this victorious achievement of the Vietnam people in 1973, and setback to American imperialist invasion and aggression, after the longest war in American history, following the previous setbacks in the outcome of the four years of the Korean war, is a measure of the changed balance in the world today. Zambia's current success in compelling the racialist regime in Rhodesia to withdraw its attempted blockade is another demonstration of this changing balance.

Sharp Issues for Decision in 1973

But the sharpest issues for decision are arising now in 1973. The changed balance in the world has brought new possibilities for extending the area of international co-operation and agreements between states, irrespective of differences of social systems; breaking down the barriers of the bankrupt system of the cold war, whose dream of rolling back the frontiers of communism has so manifestly ended in fiasco; and opening a new phase in Europe, the old hotbed of world wars. After the first world war there was only an interval of 21 years to the conventional date of outbreak of the second: in fact, only an interval of 13 years to the real chain of extending conflicts; from the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935; to the German-Italian Axis invasion of Spain in 1936; to inter-imperialist war in Europe in 1939; to full world war in 1941. Twenty-seven years have now passed since the end of the second world war. There have been heavy

* *The Open Secret*, edited by Virginia Brodine and Mark Selden. *Harper & Row*, 218pp, 75p.

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regional wars against imperialist domination and aggression and for popular liberation: the seven years' war of Algerian independence, ending in the defeat and enforced withdrawal of French imperialism; the war of the United Arab Republic in 1956 against the assault of the Anglo-French-Israeli alliance, with the intervention of the United Nations compelling the withdrawal of British and French imperialism, but with the aggression of the rulers of Israel, backed by US imperialism, carried further forward to additional seizures of territory in the six days' war of 1967; the war of China and India in 1962, where the role of US imperialist intrigue to break the Bandung alliance of anti-imperialist co-operation could be traced; the war against the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971; the Korean war of combined imperialism under US leadership; the Vietnam war of liberation against imperialism, culminating in the cease-fire of January 1973.

Our Opportunity

Through all these and many other heavy regional wars in the modern post-1945 era, one significant new feature stands out which differs from the experience of the also war-torn period between the first and second world wars. These regional wars have in all cases directly or indirectly reflected imperialist aggression, aims of expansion, or to maintain domination. In the outcome of many of these regional wars there have been significant victories of popular liberation. But the new feature which has become manifest and which differs from the preceding period between the two world wars, reflects the change in the balance of the world. This chain of heavy regional wars, involving at one time or another every one of the imperialist powers, has not so far expanded into a new world war, as might have been the case in the earlier period, but has remained confined to the regional sphere. In place of expansion into world war, a changed international situation has begun to develop which has brought into view favourable possibilities for promoting aims of *détente* in international relations.

Conferences for East-West Co-operation

The Conferences now taking place in Helsinki and Vienna, and drawing in the common participation of states of the Nato alliance, the Warsaw Pact and unaligned European states, are conferences without previous parallel, and have opened a new phase in international relations. The strength of the socialist world has been able so far, not to prevent the successive regional wars conducted by all

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the imperialist powers in the modern post-1945 era, but to check these regional war adventures of imperialism from extending beyond the regional sphere and engulfing mankind in the conflagration of a new world war. The consistent peace policy of the Soviet Union and associated socialist states, in unity with the progressive peace forces of the peoples of all countries, has been able so far to hold off a new world war and win increasing support among the widest sections for the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. This has made possible new positive steps to hold Conferences on an inclusive basis in order to reach constructive agreements for a peaceful future in Europe, and for the reduction of armaments and counterposed armed forces in Europe. The Helsinki Conference has been engaged in preparing the planned All-European Conference for Mutual Security and Co-operation. The Vienna Conference (still in process of taking shape as a conference) has assembled since January 31 to consider the reduction of armaments and armed forces in Europe. Alongside these Conferences the second phase of the US-Soviet Salt negotiations goes forward. The crucial decisions have still to be reached. All the issues are still sharp. The hostility of the old Nato reactionary military quarters and their political associates has been openly expressed. Hence the united mobilisation and campaign of the widest progressive sections of all the peoples in all countries is essential to ensure that the favourable possibilities which have opened up through these Conferences to achieve positive constructive agreements for international co-operation and the aim of peaceful relations between states and nations shall reach a fruitful outcome.

Britain's Key Role

In these critical issues of the international situation which are due for decision in 1973 Britain has a key role and the British people a key responsibility. The highest level of class confrontation in Britain since the days of the general strike coincides with the crucial tests of confrontation between the supporters and opponents of *détente* in the accompanying battle for the future of Europe. The two aspects are parts of a single struggle. At the beginning of the year we wrote in these Notes in January: 'All signs indicate that 1973 will be a year of key decisions and crucial tests both internationally and in Britain.' No prediction could have anticipated the speed with which this controntation has developed. On January 11 the tripartite negotiations between the Tory Government, the TUC and the employers broke down. On January 17 Mr Heath announced (not to parliament

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but in the new presidential fashion, through television) the unilateral imposition of Phase Two to fix a statutory limit on wage increases, alongside sharply rising prices and new tax burdens. The developing class confrontation which has followed, with official opposition of the TUC to Phase Two, and the beginning or planning of industrial actions of various sections in defiance of its bans, including of sections without a previous record of industrial action, have brought new conditions, raising the sharpest questions of strategy to mobilise the effective strength of the organised working class in order to defeat this offensive of the Tory Government, and prepare the way for the advance to the new policies which are essential. Thus this battle in Britain between the offensive of the Tory Government against the rights and living standards of the working people, in the name of combatting inflation, and the resistance of the numerically strongest united organised working class in any major capitalist country, is an integral part of this developing international situation. The British working class, by mobilising the active struggle of the masses of the British people against the reactionary policies of the Tory Government, can play a key role, equally to win a new political future for Britain, and to advance the aims of the new international policies for *détente*.

Nixon and Heath

This deepening class confrontation in Britain needs to be seen in its international context. The offensive of the Tory Government of Heath against the working class in Britain is an integral part of its wider policy in the modern world situation, directed to the aim, despite the relative weaker position of Britain in the world today, to maintain the traditional role of British imperialism as a key leader of world reaction, skilled to combine hostility to popular advance and demands with flexibility in tactics. The same hand which strikes at the working class in Britain strikes at the struggle for democratic rights in Northern Ireland, and offers no solution to the crisis now exacerbated by the increasing gangster violence of the forces originally built up by British imperialism as the bulwark of its rule, save to add more and more reinforcements of armed forces of occupation. While Governments and leaders in almost every country in Europe and the world which was not a satellite publicly condemned the horror of the American saturation bombardment and devastation in Vietnam, the Heath Government sought to win the unenviable distinction and the favour of the American patron by silent acquiescence, just as each successive British Government had already given practical aid,

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short of combat troops, to the war on Vietnam. The result was visible when Heath received the special invitation to visit Nixon in Washington at the same moment as Nixon was ostentatiously cancelling his planned visit to the European capitals of the other Common Market countries during the first half of 1973.

Cross-Currents between US and West Europe

The two days of close and continuous conference between Heath and Nixon at Washington and Camp David in the beginning of February took place at a time when new complications had become manifest in the relations of the US, Britain and West Europe. This was most obvious in the sharpening trade conflict between American commercial interests and the Common Market bloc as well as Japan, a conflict which found its accompanying expression in the feverishly intensified battle of currencies. But the division was also manifest in the fields of foreign policy and strategy, when Nixon followed up the initiative of his journeys to Peking and Moscow by exclusive bilateral negotiation of a series of important international agreements with the Soviet Union without consulting Nato, or even informing Nato until after the event, and exercising active sponsorship to press through acceptance of the plan for a European Security Conference. At the same time the German Federal Republic, which had previously been the closest partner of British and American reaction in maintaining the rigidity of the Hallstein Doctrine to ban relations with the new socialist countries, had now moved over to the *ostpolitik* of Chancellor Brandt. British Toryism, which had only succeeded in injuring Britain's trade and diplomatic interests by its adventure in expelling Soviet diplomats, had to adapt itself as best it could to the new trends, and proclaim its firm adherence to the aim of *détente*. But every expression of Douglas-Home in his report as Foreign Secretary revealed the strain. For all these reasons significance attached to this two-days meeting of Heath and Nixon, which Nixon himself was at pains to describe to the press as 'tremendously important', although no report has so far followed.

Atlantic Go-Between?

Outwardly all was pomp and ceremony at this meeting. Heath was treated as the honoured guest and special favourite in conspicuous contrast to Nixon's cancellation of his planned visit to West European capitals. Thus the reception might have appeared to achieve the ambition of Heath to fulfil the role of Atlantic go-between, able simultaneously to present with authority the viewpoint of the West

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European Common Market alliance to the President and the viewpoint of the President to his partners in the Common Market, and thereby, as it were, to ride both horses, much to the chagrin of the French advocates of an alliance independent of the US. But if there were any hopes of positive steps towards negotiating agreements, such hopes were evidently doomed to disappointment. At the end there was no joint communiqué and no agreements were announced. Subsequent light may eventually be thrown on the proceedings. From accompanying comment at the time it was clear that the frank interchange on a wide range of issues (but with tactful silence on Concorde), which in any case received very little publicity in the American press, took on rather the character of a confrontation of the developing contradictions between US commercial and strategic interests and the Common Market bloc in a series of spheres. Contradictions on the key questions of trade, with mutual accusations of protectionist practices. Contradictions in the conflict of currencies, which has now reached such a height as to compel desperate emergency measures to seek to find a new expedient to tide over the situation. Contradictions over strategic issues, as over the influentially supported demand of Congress to cut down the number of troops and commitments in Europe, at the same time as Nato military spokesmen still try to fly the tattered flag of the supposed menace of the Soviet Union planning to overrun West Europe.

Heath Shows his Colours

At the conclusion of his American visit Heath unburdened his thoughts in a television interview to impress on his American listeners the menace represented by the Soviet Union. The *Times*'s Washington correspondent found this statement of the British Prime Minister's viewpoint in relation to the Soviet Union sufficiently remarkable to be worth giving a relatively full summary, from which the following extracts may be noted:

> Mr Heath has told Americans that a good many countries in Europe might start making a deal with the Russians if the United States withdrew most of its troops from Europe.
>
> Asked what would happen if America did withdraw most of its forces. Mr Heath replied: 'Well, I think the general conclusion would be that America was becoming isolationist, withdrawing into herself, and is no longer interested in world affairs.' The Soviet Union and China would be quick to draw the same conclusion.
>
> He had absolutely no doubt that the Soviet Union still posed a military threat to Europe.
>
> (*Times*, February 4, 1973)

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The conclusion drawn by the correspondent on the impression created in American circles by this interview was in the following terms:

> Observers here could not recall any European in recent years putting so forcefully the case for scepticism towards *détente*.

'Scepticism towards *détente*.' The warning is sufficiently plain.

British Monopolists' World Strategy

This is the international context within which must be seen the significance of the offensive of the Tory Government of Heath against the working class in Britain. The British top monopolists from the very outset of the imperialist era, also in the days of the expansion of the old colonial empire, and continuing in the subsequent neo-colonial era, and still more the super-monopolists today jumping national boundaries in their manifold operations and enterprises, have always spread their net of exploitation over the world, and treated Britain as a base to exploit for their world operations rather than as the old workshop of the world to develop its productive economy. In this way Britain's industrial production in the twentieth century has fallen increasingly behind the newer industrial capitalist countries; but at the same time the British ruling class has accumulated wealth on a scale only exceeded by the US. Already by 1966 the *Financial Times* could write (December 19, 1966): 'It is seldom realised that incomes earned abroad by UK companies have now reached two-fifths of the profits earned at home' (in practice a considerable proportion of the profits earned at home were in fact based on world exploitation in respect of extraction of raw materials from economically dependent third world countries or sales to them).

British Monopolists' Offensive in the Common Market

This process of extending the net of world exploitation, despite the loss of the old empire, has been carried forward in a most marked degree under the Heath Government. The total market value of privately owned foreign assets was reckoned by the Bank of England Bulletin in September 1970 as well over £14,000 million. The total by now would be considerably higher, in view of the record extent of private overseas capital investment under the Heath regime, and has been unofficially estimated at £17,000 million. It is this greater command of financial resources (despite accompanying incidental

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difficulties and liabilities), alongside the special financial experience, technique and connections of the City of London, with the important role of the merchant banks, which comprise the distinctive arsenal of weapons of British monopoly capitalism today to compete with its rivals, despite the increasing relative technological backwardness of the home base in many neglected spheres of production. The relations with the Common Market have demonstrated this method of British monopoly capitalism. After initially taking up a line of independence of the Common Market, and trying to build its alternative organisation, only after the failure of these policies at a late stage the British monopolists have finally entered the Common Market this year, and at once are concentrating their activities to seek to build up a dominant position in the Common Market. How, the innocent enquirer might ask, could the British monopolists entertain such an ambition, when productivity in Britain is near to the lower levels of the Common Market countries? The answer lies in the command of superior financial resources. All the reports indicate that the British top monopolists have been buying up at a staggering rate whole factories, enterprises, real estate, farming properties, almost towns, in key Common Market countries, especially France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, thus establishing in practice profitable ownership of an array of subordinate enterprises which can successfully compete with British industry. But it is at this point the contradiction arises in the whole policy of the British top monopolists that the disastrous consequences in the economy of Britain are endangering economic and political stability in Britain and giving rise to the highest level of class conflict since the days of the general strike. Therefore the leaders of the British monopolists and their Tory Government are now concentrating their offensive against the working class, to curb the power of the unions, in order to seek to find at the expense of the working people the solution to the critical situation of the British economy caused by their own operations.

Heath's Economic Disaster Course

Government spokesmen seek at the moment to offer a glowing optimistic picture of an upward turn in the economy and coming industrial boom—unless, they add, the consequences of inflation and union resistance to the 'counter-inflation' programme of Phase Two ruins the prospect. The purpose of this combination of optimism and warning is obvious; and indeed the very limited estimates of future growth, made from an admittedly low base, have been revised downwards. The available facts of the immediately preceding

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period have shown so far a different picture. The Department of Trade and Industry survey of spending intentions of manufacturing capital, at 1963 prices, showed: 1970, £1,629 million; 1971, £1,511 million; 1972, £1,360 million; 1973, £1,400 million. But indeed the whole economic record of the Heath Government has revealed in an extreme exaggerated form the familiar stop-go pattern of every British Government since 1945. The first phase was the removal of controls and state intervention, with a consequent bonanza for speculation, wholesale closure of enterprises, and soaring unemployment, while the huge export of capital and import of consumer goods turned the 1971 balance of payments surplus of £1,042 million, representing the outcome of the rigorous restriction measures imposed by the Labour Government, into a trade deficit of £700 million in 1972, and a prospective balance of payments deficit, if present lines continue, of £1,000 million in 1973, according to the estimates of the London and Cambridge Economic Service. In a panic over this ruinous outcome of its negative policy the Heath Government switched to an opposite course of wholesale state intervention, rescuing of lame ducks, and subsidies to private capitalists, but without organisation of production, and proceeded to announce controls of pay, prices and dividends, in what was described in the press as an 'experiment in socialism' ('This experiment in socialism,' *Times*, January 20, and *Sunday Telegraph*, January 21; 'The Prime Minister yesterday stole the Labour Government's old clothes down to its most intimate foundation garments', *Guardian*, January 18).

From 'Reflation' to 'Counter-Inflation'

To meet the problem of stagnant production and record unemployment the Heath Government initially had recourse to the familiar expedient of 'reflation', or pouring out an enormous expansion of the money supply and credit in the hope of engineering a boom. Even as late as the last quarter of 1972, after a partial limitation had begun, the expansion of the money supply, according to the Bank of England return, was proceeding at an annual rate of 22 per cent. The result was not development of production, but an orgy of speculation and soaring prices, and a desperate fight of the unions to endeavour to catch up with rising prices. The familiar sequel followed with a programme of rigorous restraint to 'counter inflation' as the supreme menace ('The battle against inflation will continue for a long time to come,' in the words of the Prime Minister's television proclamation of January 17). The Industrial Relations Act had already been

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passed early in 1972 to establish machinery to curb the power of the unions, but had met rebuffs from the resistance of the unions. Accordingly by November 1972 an absolute statutory ban on wage increases for 90 days was imposed (with a make-believe show of limitation of some prices, but with a reality of rising prices, increasing rents and rates and new taxes on all goods; even more fraudulent was the provision for excess dividends above a certain level to accumulate to swell future profits).

Battleground of Phase Two

Following the 90 days statutory ban on all wage increases, Phase Two has been devised to carry forward the statutory limitation of wage increases to a low figure below the rise in prices, with a further still undefined future Phase Three in prospect. Such an outcry was raised by a Ministerial briefing which received extensive publicity in the Sunday press predicting an even harsher Phase Three and a grim prospect of restraint for years ahead that it was found politic to repudiate the report as unauthorised. But the Counter-Inflation Bill was sufficiently explicit in its indication of an indefinitely prolonged continuance of the restraints imposed, initially for 'a period of three years' in the operation of this section of the Act, but with provision 'by Order in Council' to 'extend or further extend the period' for the operation of the prescribed limitation of wages, alongside the supposed limitation of prices, dividends and rents. Thus Phase Two has become the present battleground. The TUC General Council has proclaimed its opposition and its refusal to serve on the Pay Board or Prices Commission. Sections of organised workers, including low paid sections, whose claims for fulfilment of agreements negotiated before the bans have been completely barred, have begun to move towards action in defiance of the bans. The gasworkers, the hospital workers, the civil servants, the London teachers, have begun actions or taken decisions for specified actions at future dates. But it is obviously not desirable that this battle of the whole working class should be left to a few sections, and those not always the most strongly organised sections or with the most effective powers of pressure. What is needed is the mobilisation of the fullest strength of the organised working class to make effective the declaration of opposition to Phase Two, and for this purpose the calling of a Special TUC to determine the steps to be taken in order to defeat the anti-union offensive of the Tory Government. Phase Two is now the battleground. The record of the successive stages of policy of the Tory Government recalls the successive stages of the preceding

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Labour Government, which also reached the point of proposing penal legislation to limit union rights, but finally retreated in face of the opposition of the working class. The Tories are convinced that they can successfully bring into operation their measures to break the power of the unions. It is for the unions to prove them wrong. The present confrontation which finds expression in the battlefield of Phase Two is the confrontation between the offensive of the Tory Government on benalf of the monopolists and the masses of the working people, professional sections, technicians, students, housewives, pensioners and all the socially deprived, with the strength of the ten millions of the organised workers as the main powerful organ and leader of their common fight.

Strength of the Organised Working Class

The conditions and strategy of the present high point of class confrontation are no longer the same as last year. In 1972 the Tory Government was taken by surprise. A series of significant victories were won by united working class action with the solidarity and support of all sections of the working class and of the widest sections of the people. The Tories discovered that they were not so all-powerful as they had imagined when confronted with united working class action. The miners led the way in shattering Tory illusions when they refused to be passively ground into submission. The strength of the UCS work-in compelled the Tories to eat their words. The climax of this lesson of experience came when the enforced release of the Pentonville Five revealed to the Tories that all their apparatus of sovereignty, law courts, judges, prisons and police were powerless when confronted with united working class action. From this experience the Tories have learnt their lesson. They now begin their strategic calculations from the recognition that in the event of a full class confrontation with a united working class, the working class is the stronger and will win. The *Times* editorial on January 15 declared:

> There is no point in blinking the fact, however hypothetical, that if the whole body of trade unions in Britain chose to challenge the new law head-on, they have the power to bring the economy to a halt.

The *Economist* on January 13 recommended its prescription for the problem of the recalcitrant trade unionist:

> Phase Two is the moment for getting off, and suggesting that he accept a reasoned therapy, while hoping that he does not then immediately arise and start a fight—which by brute strength he might win.

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The strategy of the present confrontation is governed by this recognition.

Trade Unions and the Political Fight

The strategic conclusion is drawn by the Tory Government, in contrast with the head-on collision course of last year, that it is essential to avoid the battle with a united working class, which could win in the event of such a class battle. The key tactical aim to which they now direct their efforts is to utilise every means to divide the workers' front, to emphasise that there is no question of any threat against union officials, to seek to win over 'moderate' leaders willing to co-operate, and in this way to work to isolate the vanguard of militant working class fighters at the point of production and in key union positions, so as to be able at a future point to concentrate the attack upon them in isolation. By the same reasoning the strategic conclusion of all sections of the workers needs to be the opposite, that the key to working class victory is the strength of the united working class, able to rally all sections of the people to the common struggle. Tremendous advances have been achieved along this path in the present period, with the strength of organised solidarity in the key industrial areas and enterprises, the advancing strength of militant policies and leadership in major unions, the reflection of this in the last meeting of the TUC, and also (even though with limitations, since the same freedom of co-operation of all working class fighters and free election of delegates by the unions has not yet been achieved in the Labour Party Conference as in the TUC) significant advances in the Labour Party Conference and the Labour Party Executive. This advance in the strength of working class organisation and militancy has been made possible by the co-operation of all working class fighters, socialists and trade unionists, communists and non-communists, in co-operation in the common struggle for common aims.

Mobilising Working Class Unity for Victory

At the same time in the parliamentary representation of the labour movement an active fight has been conducted by many on the left. Nevertheless this parliamentary representation remains at present a traditional separate fortress which regards itself as independent of other sections of the labour movement, and free to conduct its own policies in opposition to the decisions of the democratic conferences of the movement (as in the recent foreign policy statement supporting Nato and the nuclear bases, in defiance of conference decisions).

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The not inconsiderable pro-Tory section of the Parliamentary Party—that is, those who have on a number of occasions by their votes against Labour policy saved the Tory Government from defeat in parliament—have up to the present found their secure refuge in this fortress. The tackling of this problem has become all the more urgent today, when the present testing requires effective co-operation of all sections of the working class movement in a common fight for common aims. The trade unions, with their decisive part in the composition of the political labour movement, can fulfil a key role in achieving this aim. This principle of working class unity is now more than ever imperative in the present confrontation, which requires the mobilisation of the united strength of the working class to defeat the offensive of the Tory Government now finding expression in the challenge of Phase Two, and by defeating this offensive to prepare and hasten the political conditions for the downfall of the Tory Government and the advance to a new political future in Britain in the interests of the working people.

R.P.D.

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Readers of our December issue will recall the announcement of the decision reached in October that the increase of all costs during the two years since the last rise in the price of our magazine in January 1971 would compel us most reluctantly to increase the price to 25p, but that we would delay this increase until January 1973 so as to give readers an opportunity to take out the annual subscription at the old rate for the whole of 1972.

As our readers know, *Labour Monthly* is a non-profit making journal and is dependent entirely on its readers through sales to them and donations from them, publicly and individually acknowledged. For the last three months we have continued to carry a loss on every copy sold. Now we cannot continue to do so. We have no fairy-godmother or subsidy to cover deficits.

We have therefore had to increase our export price to 25p, and we are asking our home readers to give us the extra 5p which we shall treat as a donation. If any reader feels this is asking too much, they are invited to write to us for a refund.

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BRITAIN AND THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE

Basil Davidson

(*An appreciation of the work of Amilcar Cabral appears elsewhere in this issue of* Labour Monthly*; the following article was written for our journal by Basil Davidson soon after his return from Guinea-Bissau, and before the tragic news of the assassination of the leader of the liberation movement.*—Ed. *LM*)

COMING back to England in December from a long visit to the liberated regions of Guinea-Bissau (what used to be known, in so far as it was ever known at all, as 'Portuguese West Africa'), I was thinking about the national independence they will shortly proclaim, and the recognition of their new state that they will then ask of Britain, as of every other country. 'But haven't you heard?' said one of my more (or less?) respectable friends: 'In 1973 we are going to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance.' And that, apparently, is just what 'we' are going to do. At this very moment the Foreign Office is drawing up lists of municipal and other public bodies who will be asked to lay aside public money for fanfares and flagwaving, for wining and dining the delegates of Lisbon's regime, and generally for carrying on as though the Anglo-Portuguese alliance were some kind of foundation to our national self-respect. They have even invited the Lisbon regime's top front-man, Marcello Caetano, to be 'our' national guest.

I went and had another look at the last version of this cob-webbed treaty of alliance, signed no longer ago than 1661 and still in vigour. Article 15 is much to the point. 'The King of Great Britain does profess and declare . . . that he will take the interest of Portugal and all its Dominions to heart, defending the same with his utmost power. . . .' That, Lord save us, was during the Dutch wars. But it still goes on, as anyone may see who looks at what the British Government does for the Portuguese dictatorship at the United Nations, in the councils of Nato, or most recently in the commissions of the Common Market. It is a singularly squalid aspect of our national story, but it has also long become a singularly odious one as well. All that is obvious enough, but could there be a better example of the difficulty of our ruling class in getting itself somehow into the twentieth century, let alone the years before the onset of the twenty-first?

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These thoughts are bound to be painful for any British person who returns from liberated Guinea-Bissau (or, of course, from the liberated areas of Angola and Mozambique). For one sees there, in the realities of daily life, that everything which is good and hopeful, in any sense progressive or constructive for present or future, stands on the side of the liberation struggle. One needn't even be left-wing to think so; a leading British Liberal, after visiting Guinea-Bissau, has just been saying the same.

After an absence of five years, I found a great deal of development in the structures of life in the liberated regions. The men and women of the PAIGC (the liberation party of Guinea-Bissau) began to clear the Portuguese army out of rural areas in January 1963. In the ten years since then they have enormously widened these areas until today they cover more than two-thirds of the country, and include about three-quarters of the regions of relatively dense population. All this represents a remarkable success in terms of guerrilla warfare: allowing for its scale, perhaps one of the greatest guerrilla successes in history. Yet the political success of these revolutionary nationalists, embracing from the first the conviction that they must transform their revolt into a profound revolution, is something that the visitor finds even more impressive.

Following that conviction, they determined from the very first, and long before they began fighting, that they must base all their policies and actions on the active participation, rather than the mere support, of the mass of people in their country. Only in this way would they be able to guarantee that their revolt became something far more valuable than a military adventure, even a successful one, or a means of merely exchanging élitist Portuguese rule for élitist African rule. Only in this way, they believed, could the suffering and sacrifice of armed resistance find their justification and sufficient reward. So with every military advance they redoubled their effort to build, within the liberated areas thus cleared of their imperialist enemy, a new social structure and a new political system powered by mass participation.

The results are there today. Anyone in reasonable health can walk about these liberated regions, as I have done, in complete safety save from the threat of bombing and strafing from the air, for the Portuguese pattern is very much that of the Americans in Vietnam, and see these results. You can visit schools and clinics, simple in their fabric and still far from adequately staffed, and yet a major improvement in the life that villagers can have and look forward to. You can stay in forest camps or villages, move freely from one adminis-

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trative sector to another, and, when you are ready, march back to the frontier and cross it with no difficulty at all. You can inspect in their details the ways in which the full-time workers of the PAIGC consistently promote the active participation of village people in the conduct of their own lives, and in the use of social services opened to them for the first time.

Best of all in this respect, you can meet the members of village committees and listen to what they have to say. They are 'simple folk', not a doubt of that, mostly illiterate, knowing little of the modern world or its machines. But they are men and women with the firmest possible grip on the realities they know; and they are this today, in contrast with the colonial past, precisely because they feel now that they command these realities: whether directly through their own committees, or through the leadership of their sons and brothers, daughters and cousins who are the full-time workers of their liberation movement.

By 1970 the PAIGC had promoted the creation of elected village committees throughout their liberated regions. Then they promoted the creation of elected committees for each of their many administrative sectors. Then, in August 1971, they decided to promote the creation of elected committees for each of the fifteen regions into which they have divided their country, and to do this by a general election which should also create a People's National Assembly. None of this was easy, but all of it was carried through in 1972. Now they can go further.

'We have led the people to elect a representative national assembly,' in the words of Amilcar Cabral, founder and secretary-general of the PAIGC, 'and this, from now onwards, becomes the sovereign organ of our state. Already we have self-government in the liberated regions. Now our National Assembly will meet in the near future, and proclaim the independence of Guinea-Bissau, even though a small part of our territory and our capital are still in enemy hands.' One thinks of a parallel with South Vietnam. 'Our assembly will adopt a constitution and appoint a state council, and this council will ask every country and the United Nations for recognition.'

That's one side of the picture. The other side is also seen by the visitor. He can also watch, as I have done, the incessant aerial bombardment to which the Portuguese have long resorted. Barred from movement on the ground, they move in the air. 'The guerrilla commands the land,' runs a children's song in the schools of the PAIGC, 'and the little Portuguese commands the clouds.' But the little Portuguese, up there in his Nato-made bomber, is a murderous

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Portuguese all the same. He can build nothing but only destroy. He can offer only suffering or subjection. He is at worst a thug, at best a menial of masters whom he dares not question, much less defy.

This year, notwithstanding, 'we' shall welcome to these islands the spokesmen of those masters, and celebrate an alliance whose every meaning, today, should make us blush for shame. It is up to anyone who may read this and agree to say so now, and to say it loud and clear. Are you quite sure, for instance, that your borough council isn't involved in this macabre fandango?

UNITY AGAINST THE COMMON MARKET

The Sussex *Labour Monthly* Discussion Group has taken the initiative in organising an all day conference on the subject of 'Unity Against the Common Market'. This is to take place in the No. 1 Conference Room of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, on Sunday, March 18, and delegates have been invited from progressive organisations throughout Sussex. There will be three sessions.

In the morning there will be a conference of *Labour Monthly* readers. Any *Labour Monthly* reader from any part of the country will be welcome. The main discussion will be on problems of increasing circulation and setting up new discussion groups. Entrance will be by March issue of *Labour Monthly*. Copies will be on sale at the door for casual readers who wish to attend.

The afternoon session will be a delegate conference. Five weeks before the conference, 52 delegates from 19 organisations had already been accredited, representing more than 80,000 people. These include delegates from the Brighton Trades Council (whose President, George Cooper, will preside over the conference), the Hastings Trades Council, and the Brighton (Kemp Town) Constituency Labour Party—the only Constituency Labour Party in Sussex ever to succeed in sending a Labour Member to parliament. Trade union branches and Labour Party ward associations throughout the county are expected to add their weight, and a large delegation is expected from the students' unions. In all, it is hoped there will be more than 200 delegates present.

The evening session will be a public meeting. Further information on the conference may be obtained from the Organising Secretary, Ernest Trory, 57 Tivoli Crescent, Brighton, BN1 5NB.

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LESSONS OF CAMDEN'S RENT STRUGGLE

Ron Champion*

UNITED action by the progressive movement in the London borough of Camden sustained the Labour Council in opposition to the Housing Finance Act until January this year. Now that the Council has capitulated, albeit protesting and with almost half the Labour councillors voting to continue the fight, it is perhaps time to pause, as a new phase of the rents struggle opens in Camden, and consider what lessons can be learned that may be of value in the continuing struggle of the tenants' movement throughout the country.

Camden Action Committee, which was set up in the autumn of 1970 to oppose the Housing Finance Bill, followed a tradition of opposition to rent increases in the borough, where the prolonged St Pancras rent strike and evictions of 1960 have not been forgotten. More directly, it owed its origins to a more recent united campaign of the Communist and Labour Parties to use the Branch Hill site, adjacent to Hampstead Heath, for council housing.

Camden Communist Party in July 1971 called on the newly elected Labour Council to oppose the housing White Paper in words that were prophetic—'Do not try to fight it behind closed doors. Take the people into your confidence and, above all, lead them into action in defence of their living standards and in support of a progressive, socialist policy for housing.'

Camden Action Committee, which was formed a few months later, brought together active tenants' associations, Camden Trades Council, the Labour Party and the Communist Party. It set itself and maintained the aim of developing opposition to the Housing Finance Bill by the Council, the tenants' organisations and the labour movement as a whole. Above all, it set itself the task of informing and involving tenants at every stage of the struggle. Action around a petition to the Council against the Bill, and leafleting on the estates, brought several coachloads of tenants to the June lobby of parliament. After the Council had voted in August, by a majority of four, not to implement the Act, a ballot of 2,000 of the borough's 22,000 council tenants produced more than 90 per cent

* Ron Champion is a member of the Camden Action Committee, and is a Communist Greater London Council candidate for Hampstead.

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in favour of the Council's action and over 80 per cent in favour of withholding any rent increase that might be imposed, and led to a march of more than 500 from Camden to the Trafalgar Square rally in October.

A demonstration outside Camden Town Hall in October, when the Council confirmed its vote against implementation, was followed by the magnificent, widely supported march through Camden of 3,000 people in January immediately before the Council's third and reversed vote.

Throughout this period the Action Committee was completely united, apart from a short period in August when right-wing Labour tried to disband it on the grounds that its work was done now that the Council had taken its vote. And yet the Council gave in to the Government, a betrayal not only of the tenants of Camden but of other defiant Councils and tenants throughout the country.

The reasons go deeper than the fact that the Labour councillors were divided from the start, with the result that the open alliance of the right-wing minority with the Tories eventually reversed the vote. It might be claimed in mitigation that the Council was finally faced with a unique piece of brutal Tory blackmail: the Government avoided the direct confrontation which a housing commissioner or district auditor would have provoked and threatened instead to withhold £8 million in subsidies.

These were important influences in the situation as it developed, but the prime weakness proved to be the inability of the movement to convince and win a powerful enough section of Camden tenants to demonstrate and demand that the Council should stay firm.

Despite participation in the Action Committee, and despite the Labour Party Conference resolution on the Act, ward branches of the Labour Party maintained their traditional inactivity, remaining aloof even in those parts of the borough where local action committees were formed and the best results achieved. Only a handful of Labour councillors took part in the struggle outside of the Council chamber, among whom Councillor Phil Turner played and continues to play an outstanding role as chairman of the Action Committee.

Many Labour Party members, as tenants and members of the Action Committee, took their full share of leafletting and agitational work, but throughout the campaign the Communist Party was the only political organisation that presented itself publicly in support of resistance.

In the same way as the refusal of the Labour Party National

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Executive Committee to carry out the conference decision on support for surcharged councillors helped the right-wing to reverse the vote in Camden, the failure of the TUC to put teeth in its own Congress resolution hampered the development of practical trade union support in a borough which is not highly industrialised. A declaration of solidarity from the railway unions based in Camden and centred around the main line stations of Euston, Kings Cross and St Pancras, linked with a commitment to industrial action if the need arose, could have transformed the situation. Their support, allied with that readily offered by the Post Office Engineers and the building workers (UCATT) in Camden, would have given Camden the powerful trade union strength which lies behind the rents struggles in Clay Cross and Clydebank.

The struggle in Camden has not been in vain and continues in a new form. The rent increase of £1 a week which should have been introduced in October was reduced by the Government, first to 90p and then to 85p, in its effort to weaken the Council's resistance, and will not be introduced until March 5. It will not be retrospective. More important, hundreds of tenants have taken part in the struggle and have a greater understanding of the long-term implications of the Housing Finance Act.

Lessons of unity in struggle have been learned, and it is to be hoped that the role of right-wing Labour will not be forgotten in the selection and support of candidates in elections at all levels. The role of the Tories has been completely exposed.

Now that Camden's council tenants can no longer shelter under the umbrella of a protective Council, the struggle must be conducted even more at grass roots level if Camden is to join the ranks of the 17,000 tenants in Dudley and the tens of thousands more in Greater London and elsewhere who are withholding rent increases.

The greatest need now, locally and nationally, is to win understanding that, for the first time since the second world war, the tenants' struggle is a national movement and that because of this the Housing Finance Act can be defeated. It is even more imperative to end the isolation of council tenants in struggle both by winning wider industrial solidarity and action and gaining the united support of private tenants whose rents are directly affected by the level of council rents.

Within this struggle, the National Association of Tenants and Residents, the only national organisation of tenants' associations, must be strengthened by the affiliation of many more tenants' organisations, trades councils and trade union branches.

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The Film of Labour Monthly

'FIFTY FIGHTING YEARS'

A HIGHLY professional film about the fifty-year history of *Labour Monthly* has been made, with the help of the German Democratic Republic, under the direction of Stanley Forman and Roland Bischoff from a script by Ivor Montagu. The commentary is spoken by Editor R. Palme Dutt and Associate Editor R. Page Arnot, and the music is by Alan Bush.

The ideas expressed in the journal are presented in juxtaposition with the main events in labour and world history with which they interacted, and the outstanding figures in the socialist, working class and national liberation movements who contributed to the magazine, A. J. Cook and Tom Mann, Harry Pollitt and Bernard Shaw, Jawaharlal Nehru and Kwame Nkrumah, D. N. Pritt and Andrew Rothstein, to name but a few.

For readers whose political awareness is post-war, I think the eye-opener will be the influence which the Communist Party and Marxism had on the political life and struggles of the labour movement before and during the second world war.

This is borne out in the scenes shown from Red Friday to the general strike, the unemployed workers' movement, the united front, the support for republican Spain and the wartime squatters' movement.

Of course, *Labour Monthly* was of special importance during the second world war while the *Daily Worker* was banned.

More than anything, the film shows the harm that is done politically to our labour movement by our failure, so far, to overcome the proscription within the Labour Party of members of the Communist Party and many other progressive organisations. For this reason it will be well worth while booking this 35-minute film for labour movement organisations when it becomes available in 16mm from the Labour Monthly Golden Jubilee Committee.

Fergus Nicholson

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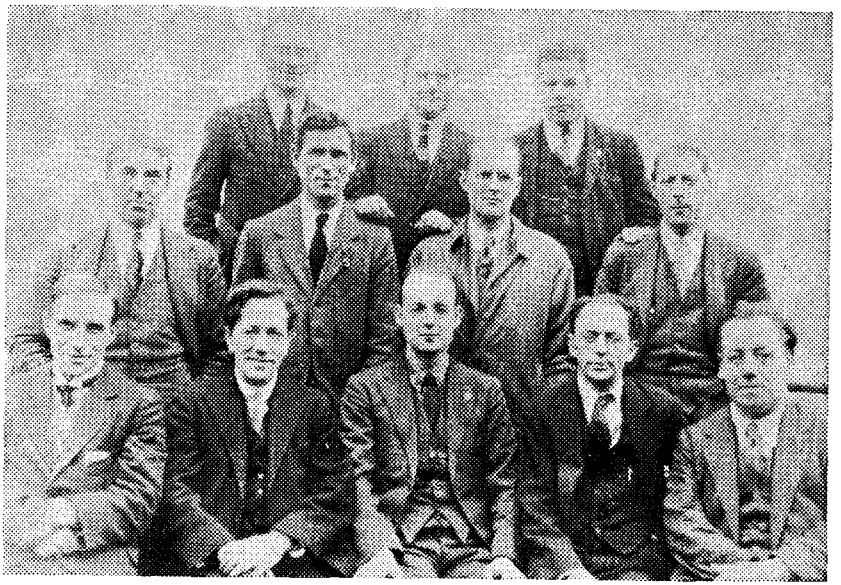

Communist leaders arrested in 1925: front row, J. R. Campbell, A. MacManus, W. Rust, R. Page Arnot, T. Bell; middle row, H. Pollitt, E. Cant, T. Wintringham, A. Inkpin; back row, J. T. Murphy, W. Gallacher, W. Hannington. R. Page Arnot, seen as a young man in this group, and R. Palme Dutt were filmed in 1972, by cameraman John Green, recalling *Labour Monthly*'s role before and after the general strike. Previously unknown film material of Harry Pollitt was recovered from archives in the GDR.

Drawings, prints and early photographs set the scene.

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The struggles of the tw

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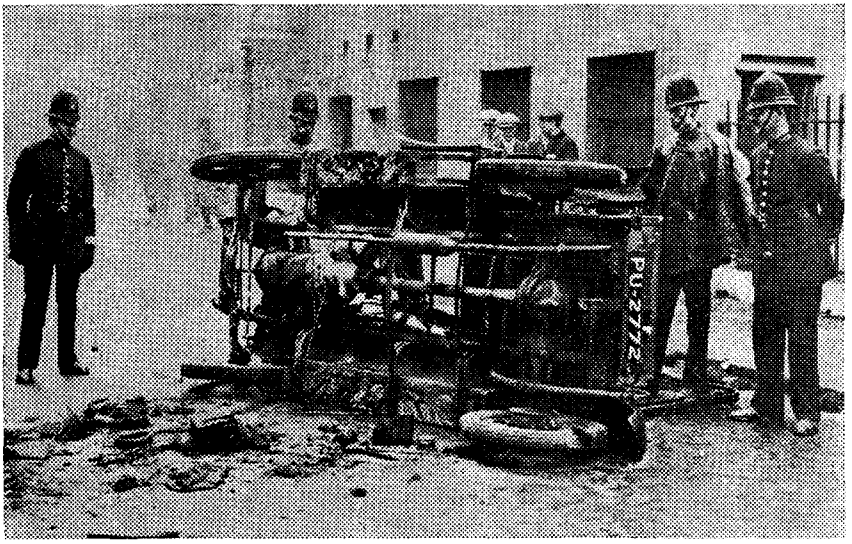
ies and the thirties . . .



Opposite A. J. Cook addresses a 1926 May Day demonstration, and *above* the fate of a scab car in the general strike.

Below left an unemployed demonstration in the early thirties, and *below right* an anti-fascist demonstration in 1937.

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. . . the movement today

The film ends with victories in sight: Vietnam, the campaign to free Angela Davis, and the sit-in struggle of the UCS workers on Clydeside.

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THE ROBENS REPORT— A STEP BACKWARD

George Montgomery
Mechanical and Electrical Safety Inspector
National Union of Mineworkers, Scottish Area

IN order to understand the contents of the Robens Report it is necessary to give some consideration to the events which preceded it: a deteriorating position in construction accidents, little or no change in transport accidents and a failure of many industrial establishments to pay the necessary attention to safety. Coupled to this there were the statements of HM Chief Inspector of Factories on Safety, and the report *Works Safety Committees in Practice—Some Case Studies* (HMSO, 1968).

Then in 1970 we had the Labour Government drafting a Bill designed to make provision for workmen's representatives to be appointed by the unions on safety, to carry out safety inspection, accident inspections, with access to Factory Act documents and many other provisions. This Bill was fiercely contested by the Tories, never reached the statute book, and was finally lost when the Tories went into office in July 1970. Further private Bills were attempted but failed also.

Briefly, then, the position was as follows. The Tories were bitterly opposed to any new ideas which would give authority in a legal way to workers' participation. Indeed it is part and parcel of their whole philosophy to resist any move of sharing responsibility and authority.

Then the bright idea and the equally brilliant Chairman!—A Committee to enquire into safety at work under the chairmanship of Lord Robens with the following terms of reference:

> To review the provision made for the safety and health of persons in the course of their employment (other than transport workers while directly engaged on transport operations and who are covered by other provisions) and to consider whether any changes are needed in:
>
> 1. The scope or nature of the major relevant enactments, or
> 2. The nature and extent of voluntary action concerned with these matters and to consider whether any further steps are required to safeguard members of the public from hazards, other than general environmental pollution, arising in connection with activities in industrial and commercial premises and construction sites, and to make recommendations.

This was duly done in May 1970 under the Labour Government and

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the following persons were appointed to the Robens Committee:

G. H. Beeby, born 1902, educated Loughborough Grammar School, Loughborough College, London University. Divisional Chairman ICI 1954-57; Chairman British Titan Products Co. 1957-69; Director Cape Universal Building Products; Chairman British Standards Institution 1967-70; Vice-President ROSPA 1968. Publications: contributions to various journals on industrial safety, industrial economics and business administration.

Mervyn Pike (Miss), born 1918, educated Hunmanby Hall, Reading University. Tory MP for Melton (Leicestershire) since December 1956; Assistant Postmaster General 1959-63; Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Home Office 1963-64. Director Watts, Blake, Bearne & Co. (ball and china clay extractors and processors).

Sydney A. Robinson, born 1905, educated elementary school. President National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives 1947-70. Member TUC General Council 1959-69. Member Monopolies Commission since 1966.

Anne Shaw, born 1904, educated Edinburgh University, Bryn Mawr College (US). Chairman and Managing Director Anne Shaw Organisation; Ann Shaw Data Processing; Office Reorganisation; Director Westcot. Publications: *Introduction to the Theory and Application of Motion Study*; *Purpose and Practice of Motion Study*. Did much to introduce measured day work to this country.

Sir Brian Windeyer, born 1904 in Australia, educated University of Sydney. Vice-Chancellor University of London; Professor of Radiology (Therapeutic) Middlesex Hospital Medical School University of London. Publications: various articles on cancer and radiotherapy.

Professor John C. Wood, Professor of Law, Sheffield University. Member Commission on Industrial Relations.

The Secretary of the Committee was Matthew Wake (an Assistant Secretary in the Department of Employment) and the Assistant Secretary of the Committee was Charles Neale (a Principal in the Department of Employment). Sir Brian Windeyer, G. H. Beeby and Sydney Robinson were all members of the committee which enquired into the cases of lead poisoning at the Rio Tinto lead smelter at Avonmouth. So there we have it; for all the talent in the trade union movement and for all the long service by many people such as Dr Murray, Chief Medical Adviser to the TUC, none of them was on the Committee. The sole representative of the trade union and labour movement was Mr Sydney A. Robinson: no room for the National Union of Mineworkers, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers or the Transport and General Workers' Union and many others. A foretaste of things to come in the Report.

Battling against new acts and laws which came out every other month, it is my view that only a fool could expect decisive action on safety from a Tory Government. It is clear that the Report is a piece of class material designed to do literally nothing to stop accidents.

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The voluntary system has failed, but then to give the workers the right of inspection would be an admission of failure on the part of employers.

In a country where the breathalyser exists, where tyres must be of a certain standard, where aircraft and ships must by law conform to certain standards, the Robens Committee Report advises us to rely on the voluntary system for industry. It should not go without notice that in transport of all kinds all classes are involved, but when it comes to industrial safety it is the working class only who are at risk.

In such an article as this it is impossible to detail the weaknesses of the Report. Such an exercise would require a Committee of Inquiry in itself. The key point is that to force the employer to apply safety standards, with legal trade union participation, is against the ideas of a Tory Government, as it would cost the employer money, hinder work where bonus payments exist and would give the workers' representatives an understanding of the real cause of many of the accidents which take place.

Safety cannot be obtained on a voluntary basis under capitalism, where the prime object of production is to realise an ever increasing profit, and it just would not do if the representative of the workers could stop the machine.

The sad forecast therefore is that the present level of accidents will continue and indeed rise, and that until the trade unions have the right of legal participation we will stumble along without direction. The mining industry provides all other industries with the classic example of the road forward. Since 1872 (because of the heavy loss of life from accidents, explosions and disasters) the NUM has had the right to appoint both full-time and part-time inspectors to examine the mine, investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences, and who then report, in a Mines and Quarries Form, the result of that inspection. A copy of the report must be posted in a conspicuous place at the mine for 24 hours following the inspection, to enable the workmen to read it. A second copy must be forwarded to HM Inspectorate of Mines, and the original must be retained at the mine for three years.

Many joint committees exist involving the NUM, the National Coal Board and HM Inspectorate on every aspect of mining safety, and safety committees function at all NCB collieries. The Robens Committee in their Report refered to the position in the mining industry, but by the time their conclusions were set down seem conveniently to have forgotten about coal mining altogether.

In coal mining since nationalisation the record of safety has been

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one of continued improvement in what is possibly the most hazardous occupation in the United Kingdom, yet the work on safety in the mining industry is not even considered as an example to the nation.

In conclusion, we will never improve the safety standards or reduce accidents in industry as long as the present system exists. What is required is a Ministry of Safety embracing all aspects of life—social, domestic, transport and industrial, with corresponding authorities at regional, area and factory level.

Over 15,000 people die each year from accidents of all kinds with lost potential, grief and suffering, and over one million are injured. We are moved by disaster and the collecting tin, we are touched remotely by earthquakes and floods abroad, and yet we stand idly by at home and even have the audacity to suggest in some quarters that voluntary co-operation is sufficient.

The time for a comprehensive legal system for safety embracing all sections, Government, employers and unions, is now.

RHODESIA: CRISIS FOR WHITE POWER

Abdul S. Minty
Honorary Secretary
Anti-Apartheid Movement

RECENT reports about the success of African freedom fighters in Rhodesia, and the panic measures adopted by the Smith regime, have once again drawn attention to the nature of the Rhodesian conflict—the struggle to maintain white power in the face of determined resistance by over five million Africans. These developments are particularly significant when considered together with British policy towards Rhodesia which is aimed at bringing about a settlement along the lines of the Home-Smith proposals, despite the clear evidence of their rejection by the African majority in the Pearce Report.

In his Lancaster House press conference on January 17, 1973, Edward Heath restated British policy thus: '. . . we thought that after the Pearce Commission's report there ought to be a time in which those in Rhodesia can consider how best they can try and advance by consultation together, and this remains our position.' It is clear that neither the Smith regime nor the British Government have accepted the findings of their own Pearce Commission. Both

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parties have been concentrating their efforts into turning the Pearce 'NO' into a 'Yes'—indeed, Smith conceded this recently in a public statement using the same words.

But events within Rhodesia and the subsequent retaliatory measures adopted by Salisbury raised the level of conflict to a point where once again the outside world became aware of the real issues involved. Prompt messages from London and Pretoria forced Ian Smith to reopen his border with Zambia and comply with the wishes of his principal allies to cool the conflict. Britain and South Afrca prefer that Rhodesia should not be the subject of international attention because that can only hinder the process of arranging a settlement aimed at consolidating the white power system in southern Africa.

It is important to recount British policy towards Rhodesia since November 1965 because that reveals the primary concern of Britain to preserve the *status quo* in southern Africa with a growing regional power role for South Africa.

At the very outset, before the illegal declaration of independence, Prime Minister Wilson declared that Britain would not use force in Rhodesia but would apply economic sanctions instead. However, sanctions were to operate in the context of an overriding policy of 'no confrontation with South Africa'. Rather than the prospect of sanctions serving as a stern warning it was more of an assurance in advance which enabled Pretoria and Salisbury to work out trade and other arrangements in good time. Both parties were assured that Britain would not do anything to disturb the white-power system in southern Africa.

Nevertheless, a dispute does exist between Britain and Rhodesia—but it is a *legal* dispute and not one about transferring power to the oppressed African population. The betrayal of British African subjects has been absolute whilst the white regime continues to be protected from effective international action. We cannot therefore expect a British programme of international sanctions to bring the Smith regime to its knees, because that has never been the intention—the purpose has always been to bring Rhodesia back to constitutional rule, meaning a settlement which will confer legality on the white regime.

The legal dispute with Britain has not been resolved so far although Sir Alec Douglas-Home has promised his backbenchers that they may not be required to support a sanctions order in parliament in November 1973. If, by then, there is no settlement, then Britain

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may place the problem in the lap of the United Nations, knowing full well that the international organisation cannot take any meaningful action without the support of the principal Western powers. In either case the Security Council will have formally to call an end to sanctions, and this gives some political power to the United Nations. Of course, this power would be more meaningful were it not for the determination of Western powers and especially the United States to violate UN sanctions resolutions—resolutions for which they voted.

Despite the weakness in the sanctions programme of the United Nations, it must be supported and every effort made to prevent a British sell-out to Smith during 1973. But all our efforts in this direction must be tempered with the knowledge that international sanctions may make things more difficult for the white regime but will not by themselves bring about its downfall. The African people of Rhodesia have realised this for a long time and recent events have shown that they have taken the initiative into their own hands rather than rely on Britain to help in the process of transferring power to the African majority. Events within Rhodesia, taken together with the success of the liberation movement in neighbouring Mozambique, have caused serious alarm in Salisbury and Pretoria. South Africa has committed more armed units to Rhodesia, and Britain has done nothing to secure the withdrawal of their illegal presence in her colony.

All this indicates that Britain is deeply committed to maintaining the white power system in southern Africa as a whole: British policy over Rhodesia is governed by an overriding consideration of South African interests. Those interests require that the Rhodesian dispute be settled speedily so that Western links with that territory may once again operate without hindrance, and thus help the process of integrating the white power system in southern Africa with the major Western powers and their allies. A Rhodesian settlement will set the seal on an alliance relationship between Britain and other Western powers and the Unholy Alliance in southern Africa—an alliance with white power which will bring the Western powers into direct confrontation with the forces of African liberation. What is at stake over Rhodesia is not only the course of change in that territory but the survival of white power south of of the Zambesi and its aggressive posture towards the rest of Africa. That is why we need to increase international political and material support for African liberation movements in the territories under colonial and race rule.

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AMILCAR CABRAL

Antonio de Figueiredo

THE weeks that have elapsed since the assassination of Amilcar Cabral, during which the movement he led, the PAIGC (African Party for the independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands), has shown a remarkable degree of cohesion and discipline, are a gratifying vindication of his leadership. His successor, Aristide Pereira, is also a founding member of the PAIGC and a veteran fighter who knew Amilcar Cabral's thinking and methods better than anyone else. Moreover, although Cabral, by dint of his writings and visits to foreign countries, had acquired a unique personal projection in African politics, the PAIGC had not neglected to develop the collective leadership and organisation that are required for a prolonged struggle for independence.

Cabral's legacy, however, is not confined to the PAIGC and the decisive contribution he gave for the independence of his native country.

Politicians and students of African politics learned from Cabral a new approach which rejected violence and racialism, as well as the deceptions of a formal independence and neo-colonialism.

While the struggle against the Portuguese continues, the PAIGC is giving a contribution to the overall war against Portuguese colonialism. With well over 30,000 Portuguese troops pinned down in towns and outposts scattered throughout the territory, Guinea-Bissau has become a liability that Portugal, already spending nearly half of its budget to maintain wars on extensive fronts in Angola and Mozambique, can ill afford. The Portuguese have granted a large concession for oil to Esso Exploration Guine, Inc , a subsidiary of the American group, in a desperate attempt to find financial support for the war in Guinea-Bissau. But in the long run guerrilla warfare will mean an irreversible drain on the Portuguese economy, and the Portuguese will be forced to come to terms with the realities of the situation.

In the meantime, the PAIGC is already developing its institutions and educating Guineans in the exercise of democratic self-government. Recently there was a general election of 15 regional assemblies, leading to the election of a representative National Assembly. There will follow steps towards organising separate legislative and executive institutions, and defining the roles of the state and the party; by the time national independence is attained, the PAIGC will be prepared

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to run the country as a genuinely independent nation and on the basis of socialism.

The PAIGC is, therefore, both an achievement in itself and a model for other African liberation movements, such as FRELIMO and MPLA, whose leaders often come to visit the liberated areas of Guinea-Bissau to follow the practical development of revolutionary methods.

Amilcar Cabral, a man who both created and inspired, leaves behind a body of work which made his life singularly fecund and useful. He was mourned by politicians, professors, students, in many countries throughout Africa and the world; he will be remembered by his many friends as one of the most unforgettable men anyone could have the privilege to meet. And long after the last guardians of colonialism and oppression have left Guinea-Bissau, his name will be honoured by many simple men and women who, as he said of himself, 'want to do their duty in the context of their time.'

BRITAIN AND 'ECONOMIC AID'

Idris Cox

WITH the growth of the mass struggle against Tory reaction there are renewed hopes among Labour leaders of an early general election in which Labour would get a majority for a new government. Already the 'back-room boys and girls' are busy churning out new programmes, designed to give Labour a face-lift on a variety of problems.

In relation to the widespread poverty in the countries now known as the 'third world', Judith Hart MP, who was Minister for Overseas Development in the last Labour Government, has written a new book entitled *Aid and Liberation**. It gives an outline of a 'socialist' plan for economic aid to these countries. Far from being a 'socialist' policy it can contribute little or nothing towards a solution of the mass poverty and starvation in these countries, which constitute more than half the world's population. True, there is a belated recognition that it is 'complete nonsense to regard private investment as aid', though the Labour Government accepted this principle after its adoption by the second world conference of the United Nations Committee on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1968.

* *Aid and Liberation*, Judith Hart. *Gollancz*, 288 pp., £3.80.

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Early in 1970 Judith Hart announced new allocations for Britain's economic aid programme, rising from £219 million in 1969-70 to £300 million in 1973-74. This was far short of 70 per cent 'official' government aid, as distinct from private investment. In the past ten years official aid has declined from 53 per cent of the total amount to 39 per cent last year, while private investment (supposed to be 30 per cent) rose from 47 per cent to 61 per cent. This trend existed both under Tory and Labour governments.

From the standpoint of actual sums involved the amount of official aid under Tory rule went up in 1971 to £268.9 million, £23 million *more* than provided in Judith Hart's plan for 1971-72. So, from the standpoint of the volume of official aid, Labour's plan was still far behind.

True, there was an even bigger increase in net private investment in 1971 (including private export credits) reaching £416.7 million, compared to £345.8 million in 1970. By adding together official aid and private investment Britain was 0.15 per cent above the one per cent UNCTAD target of the gross national product.

However, what is involved in relation to this vast problem of world poverty is not so much the paltry figures and manipulation of economic aid schemes, but how to battle against the intensified exploitation of the peoples of the third world, which is neither in their interest not that of the ordinary people of Britain.

In reality, official economic aid is not designed to transform the backward economies of the third world and to raise living standards, but to provide a screen to conceal the real process of exploitation. Even so, the imperialists are reducing to a minimum the amount provided for this screen, which has become so thin and transparent that the countries of the third world can see through it.

In her book Judith Hart puts forward an eleven-point plan. It excludes private investment as part of the aid programme of the next 'socialist' government, asserts that no part of official aid should be used to assist private investment, that Britain should withdraw from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank, redefine the functions of the Commonwealth Development Corporation (which invests in private enterprise), that Britain should recognise the right of the countries of the third world to nationalise private enterprises, that the debts of the third world should be waived or reduced, and that Britain should aid mainly those third world countries which have progressive aims.

These proposals represent a slight advance on the practice of the last Labour Government, but do not touch even the fringe of the

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vast problem of world poverty. Apart from the gigantic profits which flow to Britain from private foreign investment in the third world, there is also the huge tribute which Britain (and other capitalist countries) get from the continuous drop every year in the prices of third world exports on the world market, and the constant rise in the prices of third world imports, together with vast sums extracted from them every year for the repayment of past loans and interest. Judith Hart seems extremely shy and retiring on these aspects, which are far more vital than economic aid schemes.

Government journals are reluctant to give full facts about the flow of profits into Britain. It is not generally appreciated that the income from abroad of UK companies in 1971 was £2,515 million, compared with £5,769 million gross trading profits in Britain itself. In reality, income from abroad was £3,115 million and in Britain £4,869 million. Of course, the bulk of this income from abroad was from developed capitalist countries. UNCTAD was told (TD 143. November 12, 1971) that profits from private investment which flowed out of the third world in 1969 amounted to £2,130 million, though the document does not give an account for particular imperialist countries.

However, apart from direct profits from investment, the big monopoly firms derived vast benefit from the lower prices of goods from third world countries, and from the increased prices of exports to them. The repayment of debts and interest on past loans in 1969 also amounted to about £2,000 million. The £200 or £300 million 'economic aid' which Judith Hart writes about is only a tiny pebble compared with this vast tribute.

The terrible reality of world poverty is not just a mathematical problem to be solved by manipulating figures on 'economic aid', but a crucial *political* problem of relations between the imperialist countries and the third world. Judith Hart refers to Britain's 'substantial income from overseas earnings' as something in the past, when Britain was a 'leading industrial country', without any mention of *imperialism*. This process still goes on, for an important aspect of neo-colonialism is the extraction of even greater profit than when the third world countries were under direct colonial rule.

What is involved is the political recognition of the need for the utmost solidarity with the peoples of the third world in the struggle against imperialism—the common enemy. This involves greater mass pressure on the British Government (whether Tory or Labour) to operate, in practice, a trading policy of equitable prices on the world market for the product of these countries, restricting the gigantic

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profits of British overseas firms, and to cancel entirely the heavy burden of loans and interest charges these countries are forced to repay.

Any Labour Government with a socialist outlook would break away from the rat race within the Common Market to extract more raw materials and primary goods at cheaper prices from the third world in the interest of the monopoly firms. It would seek instead to direct more of its trade (on equitable terms) to the third world, assist in transforming their backward economies, and extend genuine technical aid, all with the aim of raising the living standards of the masses—so providing a vast and expanding market far greater than that which exists in Europe.

More than ever, the interests of the British workers and the peoples of the third world are identical. In these countries the struggle against imperialism takes different forms and is growing rapidly. Solidarity action in Britain with every strike action against imperialist firms, with every step towards taking over foreign enterprises, and with every blow against reaction, is also in the interests of the British working class. This is far more important than so-called economic schemes whose main purpose is to conceal the vast robbery which is going on.

LABOUR MONTHLY FIFTY YEARS AGO

For two-and-a-half years now a large proportion of the workers of this country have been unemployed. Throughout the whole of these 30 months nearly 2 million wage-earners have been living in great poverty, bordering on starvation: some of them have been like this for three years. Their condition has now come to be taken as a matter of course. Nobody thinks twice about them. They have become, as it were, a permanent feature of our civilisation.

Yet, if one pauses to reflect for even a moment, then the fact that one out of every nine wage-earners is unable to earn a wage, that these millions (counting their families) have been starving slowly since the autumn of 1920, suddenly acquires a deep significance. It is seen at once not as a permanent feature explicable in lecture rooms, of a continuing capitalist civilisation, but as a sign that this civilisation is waning to its end.

But obviously men do not see it in this way. Nor, though remarkable, is this by any means hard to explain. The historic parallel is not difficult to find. It is clear to us that when the Roman Empire had begun to crumble to pieces, no one, or at any rate no body of men seem to have been capable of understanding exactly what was taking place. Politicians and civil servants, capitalists and trade unionists, shopkeepers and merchants—they all went about their business as usual, accepting every fresh calamity (after a little squealing) as a matter of course, and doing nothing in the vain hope that sooner or later they would get back to normal times.

(From 'The Labour Movement and the Unemployed',
by R. Page Arnot, *Labour Monthly*, March 1923)

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MARX REPLIES TO HEATH

Andrew Rothstein

ONE anniversary falling within this month has a special interest for British workers at the present time. On March 14, 1865, at a meeting of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association, John Weston (carpenter) gave notice of the following propositions which he wished to have discussed:

1. Would not an advance of wages of any particular section of industry be secured at the cost of the other sections?
2. Would not the supposed advantages of a general advance in wages be negatived by the corresponding advance in prices?

Later he extended his propositions:

1. Can the social and material prosperity of the working classes generally be improved by means of higher wages?
2. Do not the efforts of trade societies to secure higher wages operate prejudicially to the other sections of industry?

Weston said he would speak in the negative on the first proposition and in the affirmative on the second. In fact, he did so at meetings of the General Council on May 2 and 20 that year, which were attended, not only by Council members (most of whom were trade unionists), but by any of their friends, and any other members of the Association who wished to attend.

Marx wrote to Engels on May 20: 'I am of course supposed to supply the refutation. . . . You can't compress a course of political economy into one hour. But we shall do our best.'

Indeed, in replying to Weston's propositions—nowadays familiar to any reader of Premier Heath's *Programme for Counter-Inflation*, not to speak of the more crude propaganda of the *Daily Telegraph*—Marx did provide just that course, before an audience of (mainly) British workers, at the General Council's meetings on May 23, June 20 and June 27. The minutes merely record that Marx replied to Weston—and also the suggestion by W. R. Cremer (representing the Carpenters and Joiners) that both papers ought to be printed.

In fact, Marx's paper was not printed until 1898, when his daughter Eleanor brought it out under the title of *Value, Price and Profit*. Cremer had said, as soon as he heard it, that 'Citizen Marx has given two or three practical illustrations or rather facts which completely destroy the positions affirmed by Citizen Weston'—

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and certainly Marx's paper, when it appeared even forty years later, was immediately recognised by the working class movement all over the world as a crushing refutation of the usual anti-trade union patter of Tory and Liberal spokesmen of big business in parliament, employers' organisations, the universities and the press—as well as of their dupes in socialist ranks

It remains as timely today, not least by its blunt conclusion that 'trade unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital,' but fail when they confine themselves 'to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it.' At that time of course there was no Labour Party outside and inside parliament, largely created and financed by the trade unions and committed by Clause Four of its Programme to that very aim of changing the system—if the advocates of capitalism within its ranks were defeated.

The fact is that Marx's address was the very first step in *systematic Marxist education in Great Britain.* And, appropriately, that is the theme of the meeting at the TUC's Congress House, in Great Russell Street, London, on March 15, to commemorate another anniversary—that of the foundation of the Marx Memorial Library in 1933.

THE MUNICH DRAMA (6)

I. M. Maisky

(The manoeuvres of the British and French Governments, and particularly of Chamberlain and Bonnet, in September 1938, which led up to Chamberlain's visit to Hitler at Berchtesgaden, are outlined by Academician Maisky in this sixth instalment.—Ed. *LM)*

I HAVE two particularly clear recollections of my visit to Geneva for the League of Nations Assembly in September 1938. I have already expressed my amazement at the complete ignorance of the French Ambassador in London of the *démarche* of Maxim Litvinov on September 2. In Geneva we learnt of even stranger things. It appeared that even members of the Government knew nothing of it. We began a careful 'investigation' and discovered the following:

During the previous two months Foreign Minister Bonnet, who wanted at all costs to get out of fulfilling France's obligations to Czechoslovakia, had been making intensive efforts to spread the rumour that France's 'guarded position' on the Czechoslovak

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question was due to the 'passivity' of the Soviet Union, which, it was said, either did not want to, or could not go to the aid of its ally in the event of danger.

The step taken by the Soviet Government on September 2 cut the ground from beneath this slander. Bonnet was alarmed and concealed the despatch on the question even from the majority of the French Cabinet!

When this became clear the Soviet Foreign Minister took decisive and immediate action. On September 21 at the League of Nations he publicly repeated all that he had said 19 days earlier in accordance with diplomatic formula, but added a goodly quantity of scathing words about Bonnet. People listened with bated breath. The applause was loud and general. The stream of fresh air introduced by the Soviet representative into the hypocritical, suffocating atmosphere of the Assembly led to another episode.

Two days after Litvinov's speech the British representative at the Assembly, Lord de la Warr, and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, R. A. Butler, invited Litvinov and myself to an urgent talk about the situation. Lord de la Warr, after painting a very gloomy picture and expressing the view that Germany would in all likelihood attack Czechoslovakia, asked what the position of the Soviet Union would be in such an event. I reproduce the note made in my diary:

> Litvinov replied that our position had been set out in full in his speech at the League of Nations Assembly: The Soviet Government was prepared to honour its obligations under the Soviet-Czechoslovak pact. The question was what France would do. Britain's attitude was also important.
>
> De la Warr also tried to ascertain from us whether the Soviet Government had yet taken any military measures. Litvinov replied that back on September 2, during talks with the French chargé d'affaires in Moscow, he had recommended urgent talks between the general staffs of the three armies . . . Litvinov said that if Britain and France supported Czechoslovakia, Romania would not want to be left out.
>
> De la Warr then stated that according to his information Romania was not intending to put obstacles in the way of Soviet troops going through to help Czechoslovakia. . . . He asked what should be the next practical step. 'If the British Government,' Litvinov replied, 'has seriously decided to intervene in this conflict . . . then the next step in my view, must be an immediate conference of Britain, France and the USSR to work out a general plan of action.'
>
> De la Warr expressed agreement with this and asked what Litvinov thought would be a suitable venue . . . Litvinov said that the choice of venue was of secondary importance, with one proviso: it must not be in Geneva. Hitler was used to identifying Geneva with idle chatter. . . .
>
> Lord de la Warr and Butler acknowledged the correctness of this view and de la Warr asked whether Litvinov had any objection to the conference being

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held in London. Litvinov said he had not. 'Who would represent the USSR at such a conference?' de la Warr continued. 'Could you come to it?'

Litvinov replied: 'If Ministers represent the other countries at the conference I shall be prepared to come to London myself.' De la Warr announced himself fully satisfied with the talk and said he would immediately inform the Foreign Office. We were to talk further the next day, when he had received a reply from London.

As Litvinov and I were returning to our hotel, I said: 'What you have just proposed to the British means war. . . . Back in Moscow, has all that been well considered and decided on in all seriousness?' Litvinov said firmly: 'Yes. . . . When I was leaving Moscow for Geneva Soviet troops were concentrating on the borders with Romania and Poland. That was about two weeks ago. I think there are now at least 25 to 30 divisions there with corresponding numbers of planes, tanks, etc.'

I asked: 'And if France lets us down and does not act? What then?' Litvinov waved his hand in irritation and snapped: 'That's of secondary importance!'

'And what about Poland and Romania? Will they let our troops through?' 'Poland,' he replied, 'will not . . . but Romania is another matter. . . . We have evidence that she will, especially if the League of Nations, even if not unanimously as the Charter demands, but by a big majority, recognises Czechoslovakia as the victim of aggression. The most important thing is how the Czechs will behave. . . . If they are going to fight we shall help them with armed force.'

On September 25 the USSR's Defence Ministry sent Vasilchenko, the Soviet air attaché in France, the following telegram: 'You must meet Gamelin personally to thank him for information about the measures taken by the French Command and to convey the following: our Command has taken the following preliminary measures: 1. Thirty rifle divisions have been moved up into areas directly adjoining the western border. The same thing applies to cavalry divisions. 2. Units have adequately been replenished with reservists. 3. The Air Force and Armour are in complete readiness. Report the results immediately.' Next day Vasilchenko carried out the instructions.

Alas! The meeting proposed by de la Warr did not take place. At that time vital events were taking place in Britain and France. On September 7, the *Times* had carried a sinister editorial, the essence of which was expressed in the following sentence: 'It might be worth while for the Czechoslovak Government to consider whether they should exclude altogether the project, which has

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found favour in some quarters, of making Czechoslovakia a more homogeneous state by the cession of that fringe of an alien population who are contiguous to the nation with which they are united by race.'

This was an invitation to solve the Czechoslovak crisis by handing over the Sudetenland to the Third Reich. The Czechoslovak envoy in London, Jan Masaryk, immediately protested to the Foreign Office, and Lord Halifax considered it necessary to report through the press that the contents of this article did not reflect the views of the British Government. No one believed this, especially since, on September 6, an article saying more or less the same thing had been carried in the Paris newspaper, *La République*, known to be the mouthpiece of Bonnet. The European atmosphere became even more oppressive, and Hitler saw these articles as a symptom of the weakness of the Western Governments, a sign that they were vacillating. As we now know, on September 9 he ordered an uprising to be staged during September 13-15 in the Sudetenland, and Operation Green—armed attack on Czechoslovakia—to be carried out on September 30.

During the second week in September the French Government asked London whether France could firmly count on London's help if she fulfilled her obligations under the pact with Czechoslovakia. The answer was vague. This enabled Bonnet to carry out his pernicious propaganda on a wide scale. Here two arguments played an important role. One was that France was not prepared for war and was especially weak in relation to Germany in the air. By way of proof Bonnet used the evidence of certain French generals and also statements made by the fascist-inclined American flyer Lindbergh.

The second argument was the allegation that the Soviet Union was not disposed to carry out its obligations towards Czechoslovakia, and that even if it wanted to give help it was not in a position to do so because of 'weakness' of the Red Army. Bonnet also claimed that neither Poland nor Romania would let Soviet troops cross their territory. He not only claimed this, he did everything he could to bring it about.

Two groups formed in the French Cabinet: those who were in favour of armed assistance to Czechoslovakia (Mandel, Campinchi, Reynaud, etc.), and those who were against giving such help (Bonnet, Chautemps, De Monzie and others). Daladier was undecided and immediately after Hitler's speech at Nuremberg asked Chamberlain to take charge of Anglo-French activity in the situation.

Chamberlain immediately set about realising his cherished plans. The first step had to be a personal meeting between Chamber-

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lain and Hitler (the ground for this had been explored since the end of August by Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin). On September 15, 1938, Chamberlain went to Berchtesgaden for talks.

Chamberlain's dream came true. He at last had the opportunity to sit down with Hitler and to go through the most vital claim of the Germans on the Western powers. However, what happened diverged considerably from what Chamberlain had hoped, for it turned out that there were not two trading merchants at the table, as the British Premier had conceived it, but 'the man with the umbrella', of a commercial turn of mind, on the one side, and a bandit on a world scale, bearing the fascist stamp, on the other.

BOOKS

Law, Class and Society, Book Four: The Substance of the Law
D. N. Pritt

Lawrence & Wishart, 190 pp, £2

SHORTLY BEFORE his death, D. N. Pritt corrected the final proofs of this fourth and last book in his series on English law 'as seen through the eyes of a Marxian socialist'. The previous volumes dealt in turn with the development of the law, how and by whom it is administered, and law and politics at home and in the colonies. This volume, as its title states, deals with the substance of the law.

As with the previous volumes, it is prefaced with an apt quotation, this time from Swift: 'I take the proper definition of law to be, the will of those who have the property in land.' Swift wrote, of course, before the industrial revolution led to the will of other types of property owner also being given the force of law.

The book deals with the various branches of the law. Though its matter may be familiar to the lawyer, its treatment is throughout from the standpoint of one who understands, explains and illustrates the class basis of the law. People in Britain are encouraged from their schooldays on to believe that 'British justice is the best in the world.' Perhaps, on the authority of Sir Gerald Nabarro MP, we should now claim merely that it is the best that money can buy. In this book we are shown the real nature of English justice, and how 'the will of those who have the property' is translated into law.

An interesting example is given in the chapter on Taxation Law. One might have thought that the Labour Government of 1945, which had a

After the death of D. N. Pritt (in May 1972), his typewriter, on which he had himself prepared the typescripts of his articles for *Labour Monthly*, was given by Mrs D. N. Pritt to *Labour Monthly* for use in our office. He had used it also in writing the four books in his 'Law, Class and Society' series, and the typewriter bears an inscription recording this. We are grateful to Marie Pritt for giving us practical assistance in our work and, more than this, the honour of guardianship.

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large majority in parliament, would have imposed heavy taxation on the wealthy. Here is what Pritt says on this: 'At that time I was earning a large income . . . I ought to have been made to pay more and more each year in total taxation. But, as for the time a rich man, I was in a category protected by the ruling class along with the rest of the high earners. And each year . . . I had to pay, in income tax and surtax, not a larger but a smaller proportion of my income than . . . in the year before. Such was the net result of the tug-of-war by which the ruling class in fact prevailed over the outwardly all-powerful Labour Government.'

In more than one chapter, Pritt deals with 'extra-parliamentary opposition' and the means adopted or proposed by the Law and Order Brigade to deal with it. It is, as he says, an important phenomenon in political life today and has become increasingly widespread and effective. And he points out clearly that 'the cry for the maintenance of law and order is thus at times nothing less than one more illegitimate effort to maintain injustice and avoid reform.' Of course, it is not all law and order which the Brigade seek to enforce—they do not, for example, press unduly for the enforcement of the laws relating to safety in factories or to the provisions of the Housing and Public Health Acts which require landlords to keep their houses in a certain minimum state of repair.

We are in a period in which political cases in our courts are perhaps more frequent than in any previous period in our history. And there can be little doubt that there will be yet more, and more important, political cases in the period immediately ahead. In an article in *Labour Monthly* in July 1961, Pritt wrote: 'Political cases are an important part of the class struggle. Both lawyers and laymen, particularly politicians, should grasp this clearly, lest they misunderstand both political cases and politics generally.'

This book and the previous books in the series will, to say the least, provide the basis for avoiding such misunderstanding. They also provide a wealth of information, argument, anecdote and illustration which could have come only from the pen of a brilliant, fighting, defence lawyer, D. N. Pritt. It was typical of him that, in court or out of it, he never concealed his burning sense of class injustice. Nor does he conceal it in these his last books.

W. SEDLEY

Glory Eternal: Defence of Odessa 1941

N. Krylov

Progress Publishers (Central Books), 294 pp, £1

AT ODESSA, on the Black Sea coast, the Soviet army and people inflicted a severe defeat on the invading Nazi forces, by holding out against them from early August to mid-October 1941. This was at a time when the Nazis were thrusting deep into the Soviet Union.

This imposed a critical delay on the Nazi advance. It helped Sevastopol, further to the east, in the Crimea, to hold out until the summer of 1942, playing a vital part in ensuring that Hitler only arrived at the Caucasus, with its oil, a year later than planned—and then only for the briefest stay!

Its importance for the Soviet army and people was that it showed, early on in the war, that it was possible, given the morale, to defeat an enemy many times more powerful. Whereas the Soviet forces grew, by reinforcement, during the siege, from two to three divisions, the enemy built up to

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18 divisions! Admittedly, they were Romanian divisions, less experienced than the Germans; but that does not rule out the enormous disparity of forces. The question is: how was it done?

Marshal N. Krylov, Chief-of-Staff of the army in Odessa, bases his account of the heroic defence of the city on his official war diary. It clearly reveals the course of events at the front and in the rear, giving a comprehensive view of the methods by which the enemy was defeated. It is also a soldier's story, in that it reveals, in sympathetic and compelling detail, the personalities and actions of many of the individuals involved.

Success would have been impossible without the stubborn fighting withdrawal from the rivers Danube, Pruth and Dniester. The armed forces were better prepared here than on some other sectors of the front. Troops were deployed in time; aircraft were dispersed to rear airfields; the naval forces were at combat readiness.

Round Odessa itself, the use made of artillery fire was of the greatest importance. Artillery was seen early as the only force capable of adequately supporting the infantry. With a semi-circular front round the city, it was possible to concentrate and combine field artillery, coastal defence guns and naval artillery to fire on all fronts at command, on prearranged targets and under direction of observation posts.

Infantry and tank attacks could not be broken up by artillery alone. The infantry were schooled in the absolute determination to hold positions to the last, attacking tanks with bunches of grenades manufactured in the city. A small number of aircraft played a key role in reconnaissance and in breaking up enemy attacks. A small air-strip was made and hidden from enemy observation. Defence could not succeed by holding actions alone. The vital necessity of counter-attacks was seen from the start and daily practised.

Finally, without the heroic support of the city people and the powerful resources of the fleet and its base at Sevastopol, supplying and reinforcing the city, it would have been impossible to have held out. All forces withdrew successfully to Sevastopol when it became more important to concentrate on holding the main naval base.

JOHN PURTON

A Short History of the European Working Class

Wolfgang Abendroth

NLB, 204 pp, £2.50.

CLARA ZETKIN, the German Communist leader, once said: 'Fascism is the punishment of the proletariat for failure to carry on the revolution begun in Russia.' Professor Abendroth on the other hand blames most of the troubles of the European working class since 1917 on the Communists, and most of all the Soviet Communists. Not that he has any bouquets for the Social Democrats either. 'The distortions of Stalinism,' he writes, 'disoriented and divided the revolutionary sections of the working class and furnished the social democratic leaders with an effective alibi for their betrayals. Fascism was able to win important victories for these reasons.' Actually, Italian Fascism seized power in 1922, during Lenin's life.

Coming to the present the Professor says that the West German neo-nazis lost votes owing to economic recovery, without mentioning that a united front from Communists to churches drove them off the streets in 1969 and fought pitched battles with the police

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in Nuremberg to stop von Thadden speaking.

Bland assertions are typical of the Professor's style which consists of a string of facts on which he threads his eclectic opinions.

So far as one can judge, the hope of the working class lies with the 'new left' which he often mentions without defining. In Britain, we learn: 'If the more important groups of the new left could only adjust their language and theory to the practical needs of the trade union opposition to the Labour Party they could help trade union militants get beyond attitudes only related to short-term interests.'

If capitalism has not been restored to the countries where it has been overthrown, he says, it is not because of their socialist aims but because 'the nationalisation of the basic means of production and the overthrow of the political power of the former possessing classes create objective barriers to the re-emergence of capitalist social relations. . . .'

I always thought that was the idea.

ALAN WINNINGTON

Ramsay MacDonald's Political Writings

Edited by Bernard Barker

Allen Lane, 260 pp, £1.95

AFTER A BRIEF OUTLINE of MacDonald's life and an introductory discussion, Mr Barker presents a collection of extracts from MacDonald's writings to summarise his political thought. They are of topical as well as historical interest, for the main ideas emerging in them are: rejection of the class struggle, as far as the workers are concerned; advance in technology as the medium of social change; a revolution of opinion not of class; disapproval of strikes for wage increases; the state an organ of society not a class instrument; socialism the organisation of the community not the rule of the working class. MacDonald's speeches may have been vague; there was nothing vague about his politics: he was a consistent reformist and class collaborationist.

Of MacDonald's desertion of Labour in 1931, Mr Barker comments that the controversy over his treachery inhibited discussion of his ideas: 'MacDonald was vilified and spurned, his ideas were not.' But this picture is not complete: his ideas were discussed and refuted by the Communists and some of the left; the failure of the Labour Party to do so was due to the leaders' determination to continue his class collaboration. It was a case of the Kaiser going and the generals remaining. Later Labour premiers, Attlee and Wilson, carried forward MacDonaldism and followed his example in using it as a smokescreen for their support of imperialist violence and chicanery.

In his interesting discussion of MacDonald's contribution to 'British socialism' Mr Barker points to his desire to provide 'a theory of socialism that would work in England', as an alternative to Marxism. What he did provide helped to hold the labour movement back from class struggle and thus strengthened capitalism. MacDonald in 1924 wrote that 'Russian Bolshevism is but an interlude in tsarism.' Life proved him wrong: socialism is firmly established in Russia, and goes forward to the classless society of communism. It is the British Labour governments which have provided interludes to Tory rule, the result of their practice of MacDonaldism. The battle to replace it by Marxism is on now; when Marxism wins the majority of the labour movement, socialism in Britain will be in sight.

JOHN MAHON

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

A Young Revolutionary in Nineteenth-Century England: Selected Writings of Georg Weerth, edited by Ingrid and Peter Kuczynski. Seven Seas (Collet's), 232 pp, 75p.

Identity and Relationship, Jeremy Hawthorn. Lawrence & Wishart, 196 pp, £3.

The Fellow Travellers, David Caute. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 434 pp, £5.75.

Failure of a Revolution: Germany 1918-19, Sebastian Haffner. André Deutsch, 206 pp, £2.50.

A Guerrilla Diary of the Spanish Civil War, Francisco Pérez López. André Deutsch, 276 pp, £2.50.

Racism and Human Survival, Claude M. Lightfoot. International Publishers (Central Books), 288 pp, 75p.

Taxation Policy, edited by Bernard Crick and William A. Robson. Penguin, 200 pp, 40p.

The Liberation Movement in Russia 1900-1905, Shmuel Galai. CUP, 326 pp, £7.20.

Underdevelopment and Development, edited by Henry Bernstein. Penguin, 384 pp, £1.

Discipline and Discharge under the Labour Agreement, Walter E. Baer. American Management Association (Allen & Unwin), 182 pp, £6.25.

Bradford Trades Council 1872-1972, Mary Ashraf. Bradford TC, 122 pp, 75p.

Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, Eric R. Wolf. Faber, 328 pp, £1.30.

A History of Soviet Russia, Vol. 3: Socialism in One Country 1924-1926, Edward Hallett Carr. Penguin, 1,098 pp, £2.

Opposition: Past and Present of a Political Institution, Ghita Ionescu and Isabel de Madariaga. Penguin, 200 pp, 40p.

Politics in the USA, M. J. C. Vile. Penguin, 316 pp, 50p.

Parliamentary Socialism, Ralph Miliband. Merlin, 384 pp, £2.50.

British Complicity in the Vietnam War, Kent Council for Peace in Vietnam, 16 pp, 5p.

Acorns and Things, A. D. Clegg. Breakthru, 8 pp, 10p.

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EXPERT VISION

What a pleasure it was to see recently a preview of *Labour Monthly*'s new film. And what a great pleasure even more recently to hear that the Foreign Office, London, has partially recovered from what is in their case a dangerous as well as, according to specialist opinion, an incurable defect of vision. They are now able, with some difficulty, to recognise clearly defined objects placed at not too great a distance . . . like the German Democratic Republic.

The connection between these two thoughts is, of course, that the film could never have been made without the collaboration of film makers and archivists in the GDR, who worked with our own experts on this production. *Labour Monthly*'s Golden Jubilee Committee will be launching the film, which we in the labour movement in this country will have at our disposal as a potent addition to our armoury of visual aids at meetings and social functions, galas and conferences.

The main message of the film concerns the struggle, in Britain and throughout the world, against the power of the British ruling class and its fellow exploiters in the US and elsewhere. It also shows vividly *Labour Monthly*'s active role in this struggle, and it will be up to our sellers in the labour and trade union movement to ensure that no opportunity is missed to have the magazine on sale whenever the film is shown.

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